

Carini Lab Expectations.
Last updated January 5, 2022

Date discussed: _____

PI Signature: _____

Mentee Signature: _____

1) Safety

- a) I care deeply about your physical and mental health and of the people that work around my lab. That means that for your own safety and the safety of others, I expect you to follow proper laboratory practices. Failing to do so could put your safety and that of other lab members – and the viability of the lab as an entity – into jeopardy. Therefore, I expect you to:
 - i) Familiarize yourself with the lab’s chemical and biological hygiene plans;
 - ii) Follow the plans;
 - iii) Order necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) - no questions asked;
 - iv) If you have a health concern (including pregnancy), tell me in private so that we can discuss how this might affect your ability to work in the lab and come up with a plan of action that we both agree on;
 - v) If you see someone acting in an unsafe manner, tell them that they need to do ‘X’;
 - vi) We are a BSL-2 level laboratory. Use appropriate BSL-2 technique and treat everything in the lab as a potential pathogen.

2) Expectations for all lab members

- a) General expectations
 - i) We have a ‘no asshole’ policy. Please bring it to my attention if you identify one. Please don’t be one.
 - ii) We expect that you’ll manage your own schedule. I don’t need to know the specific details of ‘when you’ll be in’ unless it’s going to be an extended absence or when we are scheduling something, in which case you’ll be directly contacted.
 - iii) Your experience in the lab will be determined by what *you* make of it. I will guide you, but it is not my job to tell you or show you what to do (except technical staff and undergraduates, and even then I’ll usually ask for your input/opinion), and I will almost *never* do so.
 - iv) You’ll need to be a “manager of one” (self-motivated and confident in your ability to learn new things) to thrive here.
 - v) As a group, we’ll always **push and challenge you** to be better than you think you can be. We’ll do this by giving you increasingly complex responsibilities, not by being jerks (see the asshole policy).

- vi) **We already believe in your abilities.** We spent a lot of time making sure YOU were the right person for the lab group. If you're here, we believe in you.
 - vii) **"I don't know" doesn't go far here.** Instead, try "Here's what I have tried...", "I can find out," "I hadn't thought of that," "I have the same question," "My best guess is..." or "Why don't we ask...[someone]." These subtle tweaks to your thinking and language foster a positive 'problem solving' attitude.
 - viii) **Be critical of problems, not people.** Criticism is central to science. But the people on the receiving end of criticism remember how the criticism was presented far longer than what the criticism was.
- b) Effort
- i) **Do your best – always.** It's usually good enough. Overdoing (that is, trying to be better than your best) it is not sustainable. Not doing your best is not acceptable. Also, keep in mind that "your best" will fluctuate from day to day. That's OK and expected.
 - ii) We ask that you work up to your 'full time equivalent' (FTE). Most staff are 1.0 FTE, which equates to 40 hours per week. Most graduate research assistants (GRA) are at 0.5 FTE. That's equal to ~20 h per week. So, we expect 20 h per week (on average). That's ~20 h of good focus work that benefits your projects directly. What to do with the other 20 h? If you are still taking classes, spend it on your coursework. If you are taking thesis credits, you can roll that extra time into research (3h per credit).
 - iii) Our work times should overlap to some degree on most days. That said, you are judged by your productivity, not your time present.
 - iv) Sometimes your project will need special hours. You'll need to rise to that occasion and make sure that other plans or school breaks don't interfere with your experiments. These times will be the exception, not the rule.
 - v) If you are not passionate about what you are doing (beyond the normal ups and downs), we need to talk. It won't be all doom and gloom, but no one benefits if you're not passionate about your project.
 - vi) Be your own worst critic, but let's talk if it becomes self-destructive.
 - vii) Don't fool anyone.
 - viii) You are the easiest person to fool.
 - ix) Seek to improve yourself without feeling the need to compete against your colleagues. **You're judged as an individual here.** We don't compare you to anyone other than your previous self.
 - x) If you feel like you are stuck in a rut, ask for help.
- c) Research
- i) I have a **zero-tolerance** policy towards plagiarism and data fabrication for everyone in the lab. This includes attempts at passing off old data as 'new' to make yourself 'look busy'.
 - ii) **Believe your data.** Often, data that looks 'incorrect' leads to the biggest discoveries.

- iii) **Just do it!** Fear of failure, anxiety, and insecurities in your abilities or your lack of knowledge can be crippling. You are here to *learn* and part of learning science includes failure. Lots and lots of failure. I *understand* and *expect* that. Get started!
 - iv) **Don't let side experiments derail you.** It's great if you have lots of ideas. We encourage that. But don't go starting a side experiment just yet. Let it ferment in your mind a bit. Give it a good thought. Pitch it to the lab as a focal point for the future. We have a place in Basecamp called "sack o' ideas" for nascent ideas that need time to be fleshed out. Once we have the capacity to take on a new project, you can pitch the idea to the group, and we can all discuss it and make sure that we've thoroughly thought it out. If you have capacity to lead the research, you'll be given that opportunity. You'll get credit for the idea. And we'll never pursue an idea you post in Basecamp without your permission or input now, or in the future. Promise! If you have concerns about getting credit, let me know and we will have a private discussion about it.
 - v) You need to have plans in place to keep projects going when you will be away.
 - vi) We try to do most of our communication in Basecamp. But you'll also get face time with me. Be efficient with this time and come prepared to ask questions take notes, delve into details, etc. I've found that a list of items to discuss fosters a productive meeting. You might drop this into basecamp a day before the meeting so I can ruminate over it. At our meeting, you should bring: a notebook, your lab notebook, your laptop, and any relevant plots, screenshots, data analyses, etc. **Come prepared and with questions.**
 - vii) **Own** and **drive** your research project. I should never be a bottleneck to your research moving forward.
 - viii) Present at a national meeting each year (see below)
 - ix) **Don't chase ghosts** in the lab or elsewhere. Make decisions based on sound facts or data.
 - x) Apply for funding that is available for research and travel, but don't go overboard.
- d) Reading
- i) **Grad students and postdocs** should develop habits that ensure they are reading literature regularly. **Undergrads:** Great idea to read ~1 paper per week.
 - ii) Read broadly and within your area
 - iii) Sign up for e-Table of Contents alerts; review search terms regularly & follow or stalk (like me) @jcamthrash on twitter.
- e) Writing
- i) Grad students should aim to write ~1000+ new words per week. Undergrads 350+ words per week. Doesn't matter what the topic is (science or otherwise),

- just write. If you'd like, we can feature your work on the lab blog section of our website or post somewhere else.
- ii) We have a lab newsletter. I am always looking for short stories, vignettes, thoughts, experiences, etc. to post. If you have an idea, let me know and we'll have you write something.
 - f) Basecamp
 - i) We communicate asynchronously through a program called Basecamp.
 - ii) **I expect that you develop a habit of checking Basecamp at least once every weekday** and respond to any notifications that involve you in a reasonable time frame.
 - iii) There are free phone and desktop apps for Basecamp that are useful.
 - iv) Configure your notification settings to your [preference](#). Keep in mind this is *your* preference. I will rarely expect instant responses except in rare urgent issues or emergencies. In which case I'll call or text you directly.
 - v) While you are in the Basecamp settings, change your time zone to the correct Time zone (Arizona-Phoenix)
 - vi) **Each Monday**, you'd get a "What will you be working on this week?" notification in Basecamp. **I expect that you spend approximately 30 minutes filling this out and posting it on Monday.** Keep in mind, we're only really interested in Carini Lab-related info so we don't expect details on your guitar lessons, yoga class, or vet appointment (for your dog, not you), though they might be interesting. **This is now required for everyone for two reasons:**
 - (1) It gives you an opportunity to think about what you will be working on this week and to estimate the time you'll need. I usually open my calendar and place chunks of time on it as I fill this out.
 - (2) It gives the entire lab group an idea of when you'll be around, what you are working on. I do read these, and it helps me get a high-level idea of what everyone is working on.
 - vii) **Every Day** at the end of the day at 4 PM you'll get a "What did you work on Today" Email. You *don't* need to spend a ton of time filling them out (<10 minutes). Because we don't have regular meetings these are important so all of us know what each other is working on and the status of those projects. It also gives us an opportunity to offer help to each other if someone is stuck.
 - (1) **If you are a salaried employee or grad student, I expect that you fill these out every weekday.** You can fill them out early the following day, but we'll be looking for 5 of these per week, except in rare cases, so plan time for them. In addition to sharing what you accomplished, try to share one success, one failure or one thing you learned on that day.
 - (2) **Hourly employees (undergrads):** You still need to fill these out, but only on the days that you work and in addition to completing the form, include the number of hours you worked that day.
 - viii) To keep Basecamp organized, **please make sure you are in the correct project/team when posting.** I'll ask you to repost or transfer to another

channel if something is in the wrong place. It's not the end of the world, it happens.

ix) **Projects vs Teams:** Projects are groups of people: grad students, technical staff, etc. Post things that are specific to those groups of people. Projects are for specific activities that may include people from separate teams.

(1) **Post data in the appropriate Project.** If you think it makes sense to make a new project, we can discuss. But generally, we'd like to keep things tidy and nested under one project.

g) Lab Culture

i) Please share your "life hacks" with other members of the lab (like where the free food is located)

ii) Give information about career development opportunities as you learn of them.

iii) Provide support to colleagues in the lab by reading drafts, engaging in discussions, and being a positive influence

iv) Acknowledge and build off the work of others in the lab

h) Lab (and other) meetings

i) I really don't like most meetings. We've oscillated between having group meetings and not having them. Right now, we're on a "yes, we have lab meetings" kick. In the past we have not, [here's a good explanation why](#).

ii) I expect full participation in lab meetings from all lab members except undergrads. This means don't plan experiments or other activities during lab meeting time.

iii) We'll schedule an *ad hoc* meeting if needed for a practice talk or other instances (see 'seminars' below)

iv) I'm always happy to meet with anyone as needed

v) Seminars (practice talks or seminars, Honors thesis talks, etc.)

(1) Plan presentation date to work with my schedule

(2) Give me complete slides 10 days in advance of talk

(3) Practice talk with me and lab and colleagues

i) Vacation and other paid time off:

i) Taking time off is critical to your success here and in life. We want you to be a balanced person!

ii) No one must work on University of Arizona paid holidays.

iii) **Postdocs and Salaried staff:** Postdocs and staff are formally allotted a defined number of paid days associated with their respective positions. Those are yours to use at your leisure. If you need a reasonable number of additional days here and there, it's generally not a problem, but communicate the need and the dates with me in advance.

iv) **Graduate students:** There is no formal university-wide policy for graduate student *paid time off*. So, we made one. They are guidelines for our lab group alone. In addition to University of Arizona paid holidays, we offer a total of **10 additional workdays off per academic year** (the academic year is defined

- annually by the University of Arizona) and **5 additional workdays during the summer** (between academic years). These days can be used at your leisure, but do not roll over on a fiscal year basis (July 1-June 30), so use them or lose them. If you need a day or two extra here or there, it's generally not a problem, but communicate the need and the dates with me well in advance.
- v) In both cases, communicate with me well in advance when you'll be using your days.
 - j) Personal well-being
 - i) We all care about you immensely, but cannot read your mind or body
 - ii) Get a full 8 h of sleep most nights
 - iii) Develop a regular exercise routine (it can be as simple as walking to work)
 - iv) Fuel your body & mind with nutritious foods
 - v) I cannot speak highly enough about the value of self-care in the form of counseling, exercise, or new-age stuff like acupuncture. The University has counseling services for students, and there are acupuncturists nearby (I go to Jade Star). **If you need help, they and we are here for you.**
 - vi) If you are sick physically or mentally, I need to know
 - vii) **I realize 'life' happens.** While I don't need to know specifics (unless you are OK sharing them), you should communicate things that will affect your work so we can work out leaves of absence, reduced hours, altered expectations, etc. I am always, always, always happy to do this.
 - viii) Respect and uphold all relevant University policies regarding professional conduct, including but not limited to the Code of Academic Integrity, Student Code of Conduct, University Policy on Nondiscrimination and Anti-harassment, and Student Records and Privacy.

3) Specific expectations for each rank of lab members

- a) Me
 - i) I promise to care about you, first. Your, work second.
 - ii) I will fight to keep funding
 - iii) I will ensure a safe and harassment-free workspace that **welcomes diversity** and **facilitates equality**. This extends to their ideas and beliefs.
 - iv) I will continue to educate myself on issues of diversity & equity and put systems in place to promote diversity in our group, including supporting personnel from diverse backgrounds.
 - v) Actively maintain a team of scientists that is demographically and scientifically diverse
 - vi) I will nurture a culture of curiosity and exploration, teamwork, and solution-oriented attitudes
 - vii) I will almost always ask 'what do you think?' first.
 - viii) Do what I can to mentor you to receive a PhD within 5 years of joining the lab, MS within 2 years.

- ix) Review manuscript drafts as fast as possible after receiving them (my goal is within 72 h). For large documents (theses or dissertations), it's best to give me ~1 day per 4 pages of single spaced text.
- x) Make room on my schedule to meet with you within 7 days of request. Of course, I am available on a more casual basis and *always if it's an emergency*. But be aware that on most days, my schedule is full. Because of this, I am not always able to give your questions/comments the attention they deserve in casual meetings. Also, I have hard deadlines of when I can be here in the morning and when I need to leave at the end of the day due to parenting duties.
- xi) Twice a year (January and July), I will review your Individual Development Plan (IDP) (Grad students and postdocs) and provide written feedback regarding your work in the lab. I will discuss these items with you in person during a separate longer scheduled meeting (usually 2h).
- xii) Give information about career development and funding opportunities as I learn of them
- xiii) Be your biggest advocate—even after you leave the lab.
- xiv) Nominate you for awards as appropriate—even after you leave.
- xv) Try to support you in attending one conference per year assuming you have a poster to present or a talk to give on our research (attend as many as you want if you provide the funding through your own grants)
- xvi) Direct you along a project that is capable of generating **3 papers** that belong together in a PhD Dissertation (ie-these are papers you lead), **1 paper** in a MS thesis (including accelerated MS program), **~1 paper** per year (postdocs), and liberally offer authorship to research staff. Consider these to approximate Carini lab minimum publication requirements.
- xvii) Include you in ancillary papers as your availability permits.
- xviii) Be enthusiastic about everyone's projects (to a flaw)
- xix) If you think that I have broken these promises, then you have the right to call me on it. If you don't think that is likely to be productive, you should contact the ENVS departmental chairperson, Dr. Jon Chorover who can set up an independent arbitration process.

b) Undergraduate students

- i) You can join the lab for credit (by enrolling in independent study, honors courses, etc.) or as an employee for pay. Not both, regardless of what your academic advisor tells you. This is my rule based on what I think is fair for everyone involved. We do not accept volunteers.
- ii) Succeed in your regular coursework.
- iii) Be here regularly and when you say you will be here.
- iv) Keep a logical and clear lab notebook.
- v) Listen and pay attention to guidance and follow through.
- vi) Ask questions.

- vii) Clean up after yourself.
- viii) Become more independent.
- ix) Be a conscientious lab citizen.
- x) Post when we are low on something in the 'Inventory' channel on Basecamp.
- xi) Include me on any outside communications that involve our research.

c) Graduate students

Graduate and postdoctoral education are critical components for most careers in science. You'll be ready to graduate with a MS or a PhD **when you are an expert in a well-defined area of science and that you have the skills needed to do independent science at a high level.** That includes dissemination of that science. If you join us as a postdoctoral researcher, you should already be at this level. These expectations are plastic and have evolved from (and will continue to evolve) my experience and observations over the years.

- i) **This is your degree. You** need to be on top of the following:
 - (1) Important dates and benchmarks related to your degree. Each department has different requirements for degrees and you'll need to relay those details to me
 - (2) Your course choices and schedules (I can assist in picking electives by providing my opinion). Come with ideas and details and we can discuss. Make sure your schedule **includes good uninterrupted chunks of time** for your dissertation/thesis research. When doing this, keep in mind that we are on the far side of campus and **account for travel time in your schedule.**
 - (3) Selecting your graduate committee and meeting with them semi-regularly. I can help with suggestions and rationale for committee members and we can discuss together.
 - (4) Anything related to your employment (HR-related, insurance, etc.)
- ii) Obtain at least a B in each of your courses and pass preliminary exam on your first try in the absence of extenuating circumstances
- iii) Fully participate in the bi-annual IDP review process and strive for professional improvement over time
- iv) **Making sure you are getting research done when taking classes.** Yes, it's hard, but your degree is contingent on *both* course work *and* research. And, of those two, **research should be your priority.** You will not get a degree without sufficient research. I advocate that you do the bare minimum to achieve a solid 'B' in your courses and apply the extra effort you would otherwise use to get better grades, to your research.
- v) When doing class projects, actively seek project ideas that will move your research projects forward as well.

- vi) Investigate and apply for appropriate funding opportunities. There is a list of opportunities in our Graduate Student Basecamp Channel. I am happy to discuss, devise, revise, and support these applications.
 - vii) For PhD students: At least **two published** peer-reviewed papers before you defend. Your third paper should be nearly complete before you defend. This roughly means you should be writing your first paper in the second half of your second year and submitting it before the start of year 3. Assume it takes 1 year to see a paper accepted after initial submittal.
 - viii) As a senior graduate student, look for opportunities to mentor undergraduates.
 - ix) For MS students: At least **one published or nearly complete** peer-reviewed paper that you *contribute substantially to or lead* before you defend. This roughly means you should be writing your first paper in the second half of your second year. Assume it takes 1 year to see a paper accepted after initial submittal.
 - x) By the time you defend, you should be the smartest person in the room on your topic.
 - xi) You are my priority (over undergrads and postdocs and grant writing).
 - xii) Communicate your career goals to me as they develop in the IDP process.
 - xiii) If you are interested in TA-ing, speak with me before volunteering.
 - xiv) Include me on any/all outside communications that involve our research.
- d) Postdocs
- i) Finish papers from your PhD in a timely manner **on your own time**. If there are several papers from your PhD that need to be completed, we need to discuss this ahead of time.
 - ii) Talk with me about pursuing funding opportunities.
 - iii) It's great that you want to review papers and proposals for journals. But this should not occupy a large fraction of your time. A "rule of thumb" I use is to review 3 papers per first/senior author paper you have published.
 - iv) Fully participate in the bi-annual review process and strive for improvement during your time with us. Growth over time is the main criteria I use when it's time to renew contracts. Contracts are renewed each fiscal year (July 1 -> June 30). I inform renewal decisions in early in April. Renewal will be contingent on progress towards these goals and direct evidence (from IDPs) that you are growing as a scientist.
 - v) Work with me to find a project.
 - vi) Own and drive your project.
 - vii) Look to me more for suggestions than direction.
 - viii) A good publication goal is at least one paper per year in our lab.
 - ix) Look for opportunities to mentor undergraduates.
 - x) My goal will be to give you three month's notice if funding is short, or I think it is time for you to move on.

xi) When you start, you should have a vision for your career. I view my job as a guide to help you achieve your vision. Communicate this to me in your IDP so I can help you to work towards it.

e) Staff

- i) You'll report to me. If someone asks you to do anything, please run it by me first.
- ii) You will have a research project that you will work on with my direction.
- iii) Communicate your long-term career vision to me so that I can help you move towards it.
- iv) Fully participate in the bi-annual review process.
- v) You will likely be asked to entertain far more of my crazy ideas than anyone else in the lab
- vi) Although you have finished (or paused) your formal training, I still expect you and support you to continue to develop skills while you work in the lab
- vii) I'll try to support you in going to conferences to present our work and for fun as much as I can

4) Things that are unacceptable and will usually result in us parting ways.

- a) If you show up to the lab visibly intoxicated (drugs or alcohol). This is a safety issue I have no tolerance for.
- b) If you are a graduate student and do not maintain a B average in classes in the absence of extenuating circumstances.
- c) Fail your preliminary exam in the absence of extenuating circumstances. By the point you are to your prelims, we've invested a lot of time and money into your success. This is the point where we need to decide whether that investment has worked out.